(b) if so, what are the reasons and what provisions are done to protect these species;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Hon'ble Prime Minister has asked to withdraw the use of certain drugs for protecting these species; and

(d) if so, details thereof and what are the reasons for non-withdrawal of these drugs even after one year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As per the reports available, the population of three vulture species namely Slender billed. White backed and Long billed vultures has declined by about 97% in the Indian sub-continent in the last ten years.

(b) Studies carried out in the Indian sub-continent have revealed that the veterinary formulation of the drug diclofenac is the major cause for this sharp decline. These three species of vultures have been included in schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, affording highest degree of protection. They have also been listed by IUCN, the World Conservation Union as 'critically endangered' in the year 2000. An action-plan has been prepared by Ministry of Environment and Forests for saving the vultures.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The National Board of Wildlife, in its meeting held on 17th March, 2005 under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister, recommended a ban on the drug diclofenac. Subsequently, consultations with concerned Ministries and pharmaceutical companies to phase out the drug have been held. Since diclofenac is an effective and economical veterinary drug, various issues like availability of a viable substitute, its production and availability in the market, use in humans, etc., involving number of stakeholders, have to be ascertained before a ban is imposed.

Research on forests and wildlife

†2957. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons to whom money was provided to carry out research on environment, forests and wildlife during the last three years alongwith the amount provided to them;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the details of the topics and names of such researches;

(c) the details of the researches out of these completed during the said three years alongwith the amount spent thereon; and

(d) the details of those completed research works received by his Ministry which could not be used in anyway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The details of persons, topics and funds released, along with their current status, for research on environment, forests and wildlife during the last three years is given in Annexure. [See Appendix 207 Annexure No. 11]

(d) Outcome of various research Studies/Reports are kept in view while formulating policy and programmes of the Ministry.

Popularizing Siddha in Tamil Nadu

2958. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Siddha system of medicine is as popular as other Indian systems of medicines and Homoeopathy in India, except Tamil Nadu;

(b) the steps taken by Government to popularize this system of medicine; and

(c) whether Government will consider opening Siddha clinics in States particularly in Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Siddha system is popular in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry and some parts of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

(b) Government of India has established a National Institute of Siddha, Chennai in collaboration with the State Government, Central Research Institute, Siddha at Chennai; Regional Research Institute, Pondicherry and Clinical Research Unit at Trivandrum under Central Council of Research in Ayurveda and Siddha; periodically conducting health awareness camps and Arogya Exhibition in which the Siddha system is also duly covered for its popularization.